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ROBERT STERLING YARD, Editor

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Park System to be Equipped for Education

ANOTHER long step toward practical achievement of the educational and inspirational destiny of the National Parks System is assured in announcements issued by the Interior Department.

We reproduce here the Report of the Committee on Study of Educational Problems in National Parks which was appointed by Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work in the spring of 1928, and its appreciative acceptance by his successor, Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur, in March, 1929. Secretary Wilbur says that he will appoint as soon as feasible the educational advisory body therein recommended and will see what can be done toward establishing a Division of Education in the National Parks System to be directed by a man of adequate qualifications.

For this important survey Secretary Work chose the following committee: John C. Merriam, chairman, who wrote the report, Harold C. Bryant, Hermon C. Bumpus, Vernon Kellogg and Frank R. Oastler. Detailed statements concerning specific subjects and the special problems of individual national parks will be added at a later time.

This does not mean that the parks are to be used for schools. There will be neither teachers nor teach-

ing. "In some of its most important aspects," write Dr. Merriam elsewhere, "education is essentially inspirational."

Neither does it mean that the parks are not now being used extensively and with good effect for popular

education purposes both officially and privately. From 1918 educational activities have developed in a number of parks from separate influences, tending eventually to merge into the Nature Guide Service which the National Park bureau started in Yosemite in 1921, whence it has spread to most of the other parks. In addition to official activities, private summer schools, lecture courses, directed tours, motion picture exhibits and other independent educative activities have added their contributions to an unplanned whole of much usefulness.

The time arrived, however, to survey the field scientifically, estimate and determine opportunities and methods, and coordinate educational activities in a competent reorganization on a scale befitting its national importance. The conception of the System as a university covering in its component parks a large sector of Creation and a wide range of life forms has suggested boundless educational possibilities.

SECRETARY WILBUR APPROVES EDUCATIONAL REPORT

WASHINGTON, D. C., MARCH 26, 1929.

GENTLEMEN:

One of my first privileges as the Secretary of the Interior was to read your report as Members of the Committee on Study of Educational Problems in National Parks.

I am glad to find myself in substantial agreement with your whole report. I am particularly appreciative of the value of the specific recommendations which you make relating to organization of educational work in the national parks and will, as soon as feasible, appoint the advisory body, whose duty it shall be to advise the Director of National Parks on matters pertinent to educational policy and developments in National Parks. I will endeavor, too, to see what can be done toward the organization of a Division of Education, coordinate with other divisions of the National Park Service, and directed by a man of adequate qualifications.

With much appreciation, in which I am sure the general public joins, for the excellent services of this Committee, I am,

Faithfully yours,

RAY LYMAN WILBUR,
Secretary of the Interior.

To
Messrs. Harold C. Bryant, Hermon C. Bumpus,
Vernon Kellogg, John C. Merriam, and Frank
R. Oastler.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS IN NATIONAL PARKS

THE HONORABLE,
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

The Committee appointed in 1928 by the Secretary of the Interior for study of educational problems of National Parks has visited the greater number of the parks and has taken up an intensive study of their educational problems. Inasmuch as it has been indicated that a period of two years may be used for this work, and many difficult questions are involved, it has seemed wise to take such time as may be needed for preparation of a thoroughly fundamental discussion of the subject. It is, however, agreed by the Committee that a first report on certain general questions should be made at this time, it being understood that the recommendations here presented will be followed by detailed statements relating to specific subjects and to the special problems of individual parks.

The report transmitted includes the following materials:

"1. A statement of general principles agreed upon by the Committee for guidance in study of the educational problem of National Parks.

"2. A group of specific recommendations relating to organization of educational work in National Parks, together with an outline of program for such work.

"3. Recommendations by the Committee relative to method of initiation and development of an educational program for Mount Lassen Volcanic National Park, this being a park in which educational work has not been developed. The recommendations presented relative to this park may be considered both as covering a general type of organization and as having reference specifically to the needs of Mount Lassen Park."

The Committee trusts that the statement presented herewith may serve a useful purpose in consideration of basic problems relating to National Park organization. As rapidly as may be possible, the Committee will forward the results of its further specific studies on individual parks, and on the various subjects which will naturally develop through an educational program in National Parks.

Respectfully submitted,

HAROLD C. BRYANT, HERMON C. BUMPUS, VERNON
KELLOGG, JOHN C. MERRIAM, FRANK R. OASTLER.

I

General Principles for Guidance in Study of the Educational Problem

In undertaking an investigation of the possibilities for educational work in National Parks the committee recognizes that such a program can be carried out satisfactorily only if there be full understanding of the relation of the plan to the specific purposes of the park system. For guidance in its study the committee agreed upon the following expression of basic principles:

National Character of Parks

1. National Parks must be clearly of importance to the nation as a whole. Their support and maintenance from federal funds can be justified only on that basis. Where the special characteristics are of less than national significance parks should be supported by local interests.

Distinctive Characters

2. The distinctive or essential characters of National Parks lie in the inspirational influence and educational value of the exceptional natural features which constitute the reason for existence of these parks. Outdoor recreation is recognized as an important factor in National Park administration, but it is not the primary purpose, and can also be enjoyed through abundant opportunities furnished elsewhere. While primitive regions can not be provided to an extent sufficient for the future outdoor recreation needs of the whole people, those primitive areas with features of especial inspirational significance and educational value should be protected in fully primitive condition as National Parks.

Primary Function of Administration

3. The primary function of National Park administration concerns the use of the parks for their inspirational and educational values. The effort to give complete protection to those features which characterize the parks is necessarily a correlated responsibility. That aspect of administration concerned with defining and planning the opportunities to appreciate and interpret the primary features of the parks will naturally determine in major part the program and operation of other activities, such as those concerned with transportation, housing, subsistence, and recreation.

Education based on Essential Features

4. The educational program in National Parks should relate itself primarily to the essential features of the parks. Since the greatest possibilities for education arise through inspirational sources, these exceptional opportunities should be developed as fully as possible.

Other accessory materials will be utilized, but it is important that they be used mainly in support and service of the factors of major interest.

As it is the exceptional features that warrant developing National Parks and their special educational opportunities, activities of the Government in the educational work of National Parks should not extend to other aspects of education which can be handled effectively by existing agencies.

Objectives of Educational Program

5. It should be the primary object of the educational work to make possible the maximum of understanding and appreciation of the greater characteristic park features by the visitor, together with the stimulation of his thinking. Educational work should be reduced to the lowest limit which will give the visitor opportunity to discover the things of major interest, and to inform himself fully concerning them if he so desires.

The specific subjects toward which education in National Parks should be directed comprise major problems of physical, geological, biological, and historical science represented there. The program should also include consideration of the beauty and meaning of nature in the aesthetic and spiritual sense, as illustrated in every expression of the outstanding phenomena represented.

Superlative Materials Demand High Plane of Education

6. The superlative quality of the materials available for use in National Parks makes it essential that educational work be conducted on the highest attainable plane of interpretation.

With the exceptional opportunity to initiate educational work on the basis of uniquely inspiring materials, it would be inexcusable if the possibilities were nullified by utilization of personnel unable to make use of the means presented. The unusual opportunity in National Parks carries with it a large responsibility to illustrate for all educational effort in America the significance of inspiration in education.

Unity of Program—Outstanding Leaders

7. It is essential that there be unity of educational program for the whole National Park Service, and leadership representing the best knowledge and educational qualifications in the country. This leadership should reside in regularly appointed officials with large responsibility and authority, and in a carefully chosen board of outstanding students of problems of the parks. The board should have large powers and ample means for continuing study of the problem.

II

Recommendations on Organization

1. In view of the fact that the purpose of national parks is to be found in their inspirational and educa-

tional values there should be an advisory body of five to seven of the ablest men conversant with national parks, appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, on nomination by the Director of National Parks, to serve without salary, whose duty it shall be to advise the Director of National Parks on matters pertinent to educational policy and developments in national parks.

2. There should be a Division of Education coordinate with other divisions of the National Park Service directed by a man with the best of scientific and educational qualifications who shall administer the educational program in the parks.

III

Procedure of the Committee in the Study of Its Problem

In examination of the problem of education in its relation to operation of National Parks it has seemed wisest to give careful study to each of the special questions expressed through the peculiar opportunities in the parks. It also appeared important that examination be made of the educational possibilities of the parks individually.

As illustration of the method of approach to one aspect of this problem, the committee presents herewith a brief document, entitled "Memorandum regarding Necessity for Further Research on Problems Involved in the Educational Program of National Parks."

As illustration of the method of approach in study of an individual park, there is presented a document, entitled "Recommendations regarding Development of an Educational Program at Mount Lassen Volcanic National Park."

In consideration of the general plan of educational work in National Parks, the committee has given attention to the opportunities in practically all of the parks, and has accumulated a large volume of data. These reports will be presented when further studies make it possible to digest and simplify the proposals.

In study of the best means for organization of an educational program, the committee has considered the opportunities under two heads:

(a) Service to the visiting public desiring to take advantage of the extraordinary opportunities of the parks;

(b) Service to educators and investigators attempting to obtain new information, or to increase their general or special knowledge of the phenomena represented in the parks.

There has been intensive study of the principal phases of work now under way and proposed for the National Parks, such as, nature guide service, visual instruction, museums, and publications designed to serve as aids to visitors and investigators. Further report upon all of the matters mentioned will be transmitted as early as it becomes possible to work through to a satisfactory solution the problems under consideration.

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OBJECTS

1. To conserve nature and win all America to its appreciation and study.
2. To encourage use of the National Parks System for enjoyment of its unsurpassed spiritual and educational value.
3. To protect National Parks against whatever may tend to disturb their continuity of natural conditions or to diminish their effectiveness as supreme expressions of beauty and majesty in nature.
4. To promote use of National Parks for purposes of popular education and scientific investigation.
5. To promote a national recreational policy under which publicly owned lands of the nation shall be equipped for recreational service of the people so far as this is consistent with other requirements.
6. To protect wild birds, animals and plants, and conserve typical areas existing under primitive conditions.
7. To aid specialist organizations, and to interest organizations of many kinds and the people generally, in these objectives.

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